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TAGS: PHUM PREL PGOV EUN PO
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE POSITIONS IN ADVANCE OF FEBRUARY 18-19
GAERC

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Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol-Econ Officer, Embassy Lisbon
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) Deputy EU Correspondent Ana Filomena Rocha stressed that the February GAERC would be focused heavily on how to coordinate a unified response to a Kosovar coordinated declaration of independence (CDI). In addition, she responded to reftel points on the Middle East, Chad, Kenya, and Myanmar/Burma.

12. (C) Kosovo: Rocha reported that the ministers planned to gather on February 17 in advance of the GAERC to discuss a common EU text in reaction to a Kosovo declaration of independence. She added that the internal debate on how best to respond as a group had become heated, but she claimed that it was an important test of the EU's ability to present a united front on foreign policy issues. In addition to the ministers' meeting on Sunday, Rocha said the EU had set aside the possibility of an emergency COREPER meeting for Monday as a last-ditch opportunity to finalize a common text. If successful, the EU common response would likely consist of a general overview, taking note of the CDI without including specific language on recognition.

13. (C) Middle East: Stabilizing Gaza and encouraging financial pledges will be the key issues in the Middle East discussions, Rocha said. Regarding donations, Rocha reported that several member states had made significant pledges at the Paris conference but had not made the funds available yet. Portuguese FM Amado will be flying directly to the GAERC after accompanying President Cavaco Silva on a state visit to Jordan, so he may offer insights from his trip. Rocha also predicted that Amado would underscore that Syria remains a key player in any peace discussions.

14. (C) Chad: The ESDP mission to Chad remains scheduled for late March, but will likely be postponed if the internal conflict continues.

15. (C) Kenya: According to Rocha, several EU member states were unhappy with what they regarded as the slow pace of Annan's reconciliation efforts and have proposed EU sanctions. Portugal made a strong case against the appointment of an EU special envoy proposal in the recent COAF working group meeting and hopes to convince other EU states likewise to hold off on sanctions to allow Annan time to succeed.

16. (C) Burma/Myanmar: Select EU member states are pressing for additional EU sanctions against Burma. Rocha noted that some had expressed concern about the junta's public statements, as well as its exclusionary policies, and viewed additional sanctions as the best way to pressure those in power. Portugal is not convinced of the need for additional measures since the EU has not assessed the utility of

sanctions imposed last fall. Rocha noted that Portugal would be willing to discuss additional measures in the future if it became necessary, but a better first step would be to persuade China to use its influence over the junta.

Stephenson